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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
JUN 22 1971

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: June 18, 1971

SUBJECT : INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents, May 1971

REF :

SUMMARY: May violence was reflected in 184 press-reported incidents including 104 bodies found. Of these 104, 27 were reported to be in varying stages of decomposition; 10 of which were corpses resulting from the Government's unpublicized Pacaya operation of January-February, 1971. Of the remaining 17 deaths, 10 probably occurred in May, 5 in late April, and 2 at some undeterminable time in the late April-early May period. The May total of 104 therefore includes 10 who were definitely killed earlier in the year; and 5 to 7 who probably died in April. If we substract these 17 and add 7 to the April count, the figures would reach the same total for the two months. However, there were also a few bodies counted in April which were of persons killed in March, so we must still conclude that May represents a new three-year high of publicly reported violence for the third consecutive month in a row.

Terrorists appeared responsible for 10 attacks against security forces, several other killings, one kidnapping, and eight propaganda-bomb explosions. Security forces performed well this month against subversives. Almost half of the month's newspaper-recorded incidents and killings took place on the South Coast where unidentified, machinegun-toting bands carried out 22 assaults against private homes. The 43 Northeast incidents were more than double April's total, which was the previous high.

STATISTICS

1. Newspapers in May reported 184 incidents of probable politically-motivated violence. This figure includes 104 killings, 16 of which reportedly bore signs of torture. Fifty-two of the total were never identified. Seventy-one of the total (this figure overlaps the 52) were reported found abandoned in barrancos, or fincas, and by the sides of national highways. The press carried 36 reports of kidnappings and disappearances including those of six students.

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Attacks Against Security Forces and Capital Incidents Attributable to Terrorists

2. From press accounts, the far Left appeared involved in up to 10 attacks against security forces this month in which two policemen were killed and three others wounded. In early May, unidentified men partially burned a San Marcos police post (garita), then escaped. Assailants shot and killed a National Policeman, leaving his body at km. 83 of the Pacific Highway; the press states that the motivation of the shooting is unknown. On May 11, terrorists machinegunned to death National Police Captain Jose Maria De Leon Maldonado and wounded another agent in a downtown Guatemala City ambush (GUATEMALA 2029; [redacted] Unidentified men shot and seriously wounded a treasury policeman May 16 in the capital's Zone 18. There were four other attacks in Guatemala City in which there were neither injuries nor captures; passing vehicles fired at National Police patrol cars on May 13 and 14; unknown men in a red panel truck made a machinegun pass at Military policemen (PMAs) guarding a Zone 3 post office May 16; another such pass was directed at a PMA guarding a local plant May 27. And on May 31, a National Policeman was badly wounded by gunfire in a Zone 19 ambush.

3. Insurgents kidnapped on May 17 Angel "Lito" Zardetto, son of the owner of the Maya-Excelsior Hotel, releasing him five days later for a reported Q300,000 ransom. The far Left also appeared to have participated in a number of assaults against government and finca officials on the South Coast and the Northeast (see below).

4. In the propaganda field, the press reported that the far Left exploded four propaganda bombs in Guatemala Department, three in San Marcos Department including one in front of an MLN headquarters building, and a PGT propaganda-bomb in Quezaltenango. In early May, Peten authorities complained of the growing number of subversive signs and of the increasing wave of banditry and subversion in the area, including assaults on sawmills. In addition, in early May, subversives celebrating May Day tossed tacks and Communist propaganda on the Pacific Highway although the National Police made a number of arrests. In mid-May, the press reported that the National Police captured three youths with PGT propaganda after a shoot-out.

South Coast Violence

5. There were six assaults, possibly by insurgents, against finca officials, one of whom was killed. In early May a Suchitepequez finca owner was kidnapped and later found blindfolded, riddled with bullets, and reportedly tortured. Unidentified men, machinegun-armed, often masked, attacked five other South Coast farms, kidnapping a Santa Rosa finca guard and threatening to kill a San Marcos finca administrator.

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6. However, the bulk of these South Coast group assaults, 15 in number, occurred against families, at least several of which were of modest means. The attacks resulted in 13 dead and 13 wounded, including:

May 1 The wife of a South Coast port resident reported that machinegun-armed men in olive green uniforms entered their house and carried off her husband. Ocos, San Marcos.

May 8 Various machinegun-armed men seized a couple from their home and killed both in front of their children. Nuevo Progreso, San Marcos.

May 10 Unidentified machinegun-armed men entered the house of a resident of a small village at midnight and killed him. Catarina, San Marcos.

May 12 Eighteen machinegun-armed men dragged a campesino from his home, demanded to know where the firearms were hidden, then shot and killed him despite his denial and offer to have them search his house. Coatepeque, Quezaltenango.

May 18 Unknowns seized a campesino from his home, hung him from a tree, then machinegunned him to death in front of his wife and children. Santa Rosa.

May 18 Unidentified men in black suits shot and killed a man in front of his wife and four children. Escuintla.

7. Finally, men partially concealed under large sombreros and armed with .45 caliber and 9mm weaponry shot and killed a minor MLN official in Guyotenango, Suchitepequez on May 29. Also, three bodies were found shot to death with an "Ojo por Ojo" note attached; two May 9 in San Marcos and another May 12 in Escuintla.

Eastern Violence

8. Violence in the eastern departments rose to 42 incidents, including three attacks against finca officials. A Chiquimula businessman was riddled with bullets from an ambush May 1 and a Jalapa finquero was machinegunned to death on May 16. In addition, unknown men reportedly tried to burn down the installations of a Zacapa farm at the end of the month, but reported quick action by employees prevented extensive damage.



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9. Victims of other acts of violence in the East varies. On May 1, a confidential agent from the Puerto Barrios military base was found shot to death (.45 caliber bullets) with another unidentified man and a 15-year-old girl. Unidentified men kidnapped Anselmo MONZON, age 60, and his son on May 4 without stating their motive, machinegunned both at Km. 80 of the Atlantic Highway. The son survived to tell the tale. Professor Hector FION Carma, the 2nd Congressional Vice President in the Arbenz Government, was killed in Gualan, Zacapa, on May 9. The police reportedly have arrested two suspects. Twenty-six, mostly unidentified, were found dead in Eastern Guatemala, including two common criminals and a small landowner. In addition, armed men seized a campesino from his home.

Military Commissioners and Mayors

10. Seven incidents of a possible political nature appeared in the press this month involving military commissioners. Three were killed, one wounded, and another disappeared. On May 6, a machinegun-armed band robbed a Jalapa military commissioner of Q300 and his arms, said they were of a clandestine band, and threatened to kill him. A Guatemalan Department military commissioner was intercepted in Zone 1 and told to be careful or he would die. In San Marcos Department armed bands killed two military commissioners, one on May 5 and another on May 20 and wounded a third. In the Northeast, heavily armed men kidnapped a Jalapa military commissioner May 9 and killed a Zacapa commissioner on May 12, although in the latter case, authorities blamed bandit-

[redacted]

11. Though common criminality is not part of this report, the rough and tough nature of the above officials is shown by four different reported incidents which occurred in early May: a) a Jalapa alcalde and a comisionado militar were arrested and charged with murder, b) a Zacapa commissioner was arrested and charged with menacing the populace with a 9mm pistol while drunk, c) an auxiliary mayor of Santa Rosa was arrested by a capital radio patrol car when he was about to rape two girls kidnapped from Amatitlan early that day, and d) an Isabal Department mayor was killed by machetes by two now sought by local police authorities.

12. No mayors were injured in May, but three reported receiving death threats: the DCG mayoress of San Jose, Escuintla; an auxiliary mayor in Queztal, San Marcos appointed by a PR mayor; and the PR mayor of San Vicente Pacaya, Escuintla.

Police Score Number of Successes

13. The press reported a high number of security force actions during the month against the far Left. National Policemen investigating a suspicious five-man group near the capital were fired upon. They returned the fire, wounding two of the alleged subversives who were subsequently captured. PMAs in San Marcos, investigating a kidnapping report, engaged in a firefight with a band of men armed with rifles, shotguns, and .45 caliber and 9mm weaponry; three members of the band were captured along with subversive propaganda. On May 31, three guerrillas including ex-soccer star Victor Manuel CUELLAR [redacted] were killed by National Police after a chase which ended on a bus in Zone 1. Two policemen and as many as 10 bus passengers were reported wounded in the gunfight. One guerrilla escaped. On May 28, police captured three presumed guerrillas after a long chase in the capital.

Kidnappings, Disappearances, and Exhibitions

14. There were 36 reported kidnappings or disappearances this month in the press (not all of which were included in the total incidents for lack of political indicators). Relatives charged the National Police with nine abductions, although authorities disclaimed knowledge. The press identified six of the 36 as students. A seventh, a university law student, died of a bullet wound in his Zone 19 home, but no other particulars were available.

15. On May 17, the press noted that there had been 903 court exhibition requests filed during the State of Siege; however, often several are filed for the same person. By Embassy count, 493 individuals have been sought during the mid-November to May 31 period, 76 were produced, an additional 45 have been released, 13 are now deceased, and 359 still missing. Finally, the press reported that 10 decomposed bodies were recovered from the Pacaya area.

COMMENT: Of the total of 104 deaths, the Embassy attributes four to the Left, one of which is corroborated by other sources. That leaves 100 unattributed. Significantly, we have witnessed the greatest increase in deaths in the unattributed category over the past three months. Despite the very high level of press-reported violence, however, there have been very few public expressions of concern by the Government or others. In part this is due to press restrictions, in part to the geographic location of the murders (2/3 took place outside the capital in May, where local press coverage is considerably limited), in part to the lack of prominence of the victims (over 65% of the victims were never identified publicly) and in part to the fact that even those concerned have made no public outcry for reasons of personal security.



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The political opposition is included in the last category. Their concern stems from a series of interrelated self-interests: First, the State of Siege prevents them from engaging in routine political activity (moving around the country, meeting with affiliates, issuing party statements, etc.), thus party intelligence suffers. Second, the politicians' ignorance of what is going on prevents them from protecting their own which in turn weakens party loyalty. Third, party leaders are unable to act as spokesmen for the mass of uncommitted and they fear that their silence is harming prospects of party growth. In some instances, the PR, for example, party spokesmen have made their concerns known to the President. PR Deputy Rafael PANTOJA met with the President last week at which time he pressed hard for an end to the State of Siege and reportedly discussed the general security situation. The State of Siege and the high level of violence are closely linked in the minds of the political opposition.

Security forces continue to exert heavy pressure on terrorist organizations. In May, the press credits the National Police and Army with over a dozen captures of subversives. In addition, a high-level terrorist leader was killed. Though security force mismanagement failed to destroy one rural guerrilla grouping, overall in the month security forces turned in a very credible performance. Nonetheless, despite leadership and material losses, the far Left's capability to launch operations remains high.

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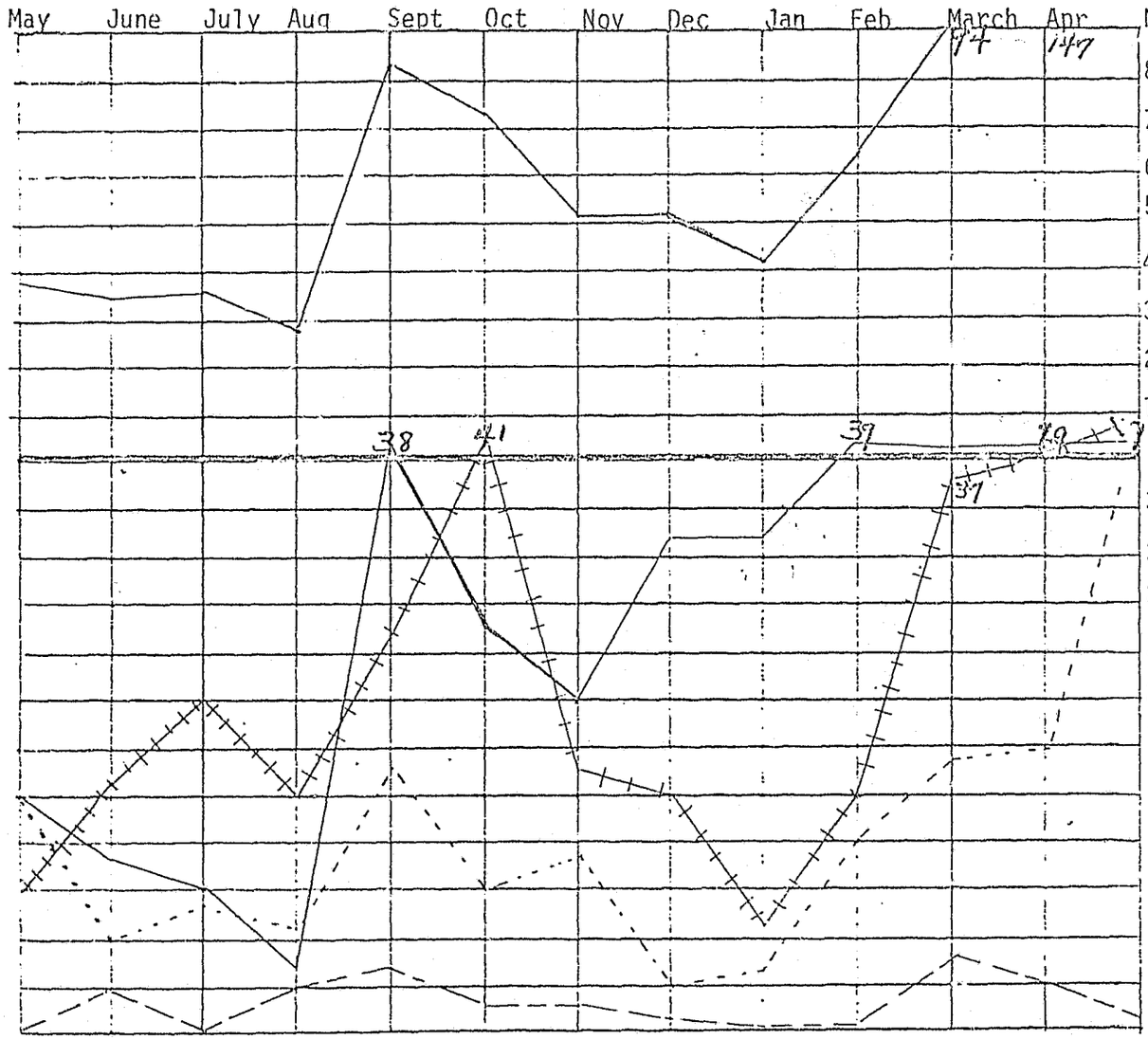
MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS BY REGION (1) - May 1970 - May 1971

area 113 Guatemala




Total - 184

South Coast 83 (3)

Capital 58 (2)

Eastern 42 (4)

Highlands 1 (5)

1. For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and assassinated bodies.
2. Capital area: Sacatepequez, Guatemala
3. South Coast: San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa
4. Eastern Region: Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal, El Peten
5. Highlands: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Solola